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CIA/ONE/STAFF MEM/52-62 YEMEN REVOLUTION: DOMESTIC PROGNOSIS  
SECRET NOV 62 01 OF 01

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*CIA/ONE/STAFF MEM/52-62*  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

19 November 1962

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 52-62 (Internal ONE Working Paper -  
CIA Distribution Only)

SUBJECT: The Yemen Revolution: Domestic Prognosis and Area  
Implications

SUMMARY

The success of the Egyptian-supported revolutionary regime in  
Yemen has been a signal victory for Nasser. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] a royalist counterstroke have been ineffectual in the  
face of massive UAR armed force in Yemen. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The new government in Yemen has a better than even  
chance of staying in power as long as Egyptian support continues.  
Should the latter diminish sharply, the regime would have serious  
trouble maintaining itself and the country might sink into chaos.

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file

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GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
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Antimonarchical, nationalist elements throughout the area have been heartened by the Yemen revolution. Nasser has committed himself fully to its success and literally cannot afford to lose there.

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The British attempt to promote a safe, stable government in South Arabia will be much more difficult with a republican Yemen as neighbor. The conservatives' faith in US backing for their regimes has been weakened and conversely, the notion, widely held in the area that Nasser is the US's chosen instrument, will become re-enforced.

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#### I. WITHIN YEMEN

1. The revolutionary government of the Yemen Arab Republic has succeeded in establishing control over the major portion of Yemen in the six weeks since the overthrow of the monarchy. This success has been in large part the result of sizeable ground and air assistance from the UAR. Regular Egyptian army units, covered

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by UAR, and UAR-flown Yemeni, aircraft, are engaged in operations against pro-royalist tribal forces in the north and east of the country. The Yemen armed forces themselves have been unable to do more than garrison the main towns.

2. The displaced Imam Badr and his uncle Hagan are conducting guerrilla operations against outlying towns and communications lines of the republican government. Other royalist tribesmen are operating near the Aden protectorate border.

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royalist forces -- drawn primarily from the Zaydi tribes which are the traditional supporters of the Imamate -- have, on several occasions, achieved local successes against the republican and UAR forces. In general, however, superior Egyptian forces have been able to contain the royalists and now appear to be extending the area of central government control close to the Saudi border.

### The Outlook

3. The Yemen civil war has taken on the character of an ideological struggle between Nasser's revolutionary Arab socialism

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and the conservative monarchies.

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if not eager, to reduce its heavy commitment of arms and resources in Yemen.

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4. Any disengagement will, of course require, the concurrence, however reluctant, of the principals

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some tangible benefit to them.

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For Nasser, the successful establishment of a republican regime in Yemen is a signal victory and he almost certainly will not withdraw unless he is convinced that it is quite firmly in control. At best, the phased withdrawal of UAR forces from Yemen

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will be a long,

drawn-out, tortuous process in which both sides may be expected to stall, cheat and prevaricate to the greatest possible degree in order that the other party may not get a slight advantage.

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5. At worst, the withdrawal may not come off at all and the proxy war being fought in Yemen could go on until one side or the other is definitively beaten. Given the weight of force that Nasser can dispose in Yemen, the odds would be heavily in favor of the republican side in such a struggle,

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We expect that this process will be subject to temporary reversals and that the fighting may involve occasional escalations.

6. Whatever the extent of outside participation in the Yemeni civil war, the Sallal government faces serious problems in building, from scratch, a governmental organization. The shooting of some two dozen principal supporters of Imam Ahmad destroyed what had passed for an administrative system. What the republicans have to start with are several government office buildings, a telegraph system and a few million rivals (in coin). Everything else must be organized and made to function from the ground up. The paucity of administrative resources will be a boon to the always turbulent mountain tribes, which look to the institution of the Imamate for religious as well as

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political leadership. While many were disaffected by the excessive harshness of the late Imam Ahmad, they are likely to strenuously resist governmental control exercised by the erstwhile second-class Shafi townsmen and lowlanders. There will almost certainly be tribal dissidence for some time to come but the shortage of acknowledged tribal leaders will remain a limiting factor.

7. The new regime has assets on its side however. It has adopted a shrewd approach to the tribal problem, in buying the loyalty of some key sheikhs by giving them ministerial titles and salaries. The Sallal government undoubtedly has gotten considerable support in the country at large and, especially in the towns, it contrasts favorably in many localities with the previous system. It can almost certainly count on massive and long-term Egyptian aid in the form of funds, technical and administrative guidance and military training missions. The American Legation in Yemen reports that the Soviets have already responded to Yemeni requests for assistance by dispatching at least two hundred technicians and by offering arms and economic aid.

8. On balance, we believe the republican regime has a better than even chance of continuing in power. Should there be a

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falling-out between the presently dominant Egyptian-controlled elements, such as Deputy Prime Minister Baydany and the more purely nationalist types, leading to a major diminution of Cairo's support the prospects would change considerably. In such circumstances, the Yemen government would have serious trouble maintaining itself and tribal dissidence could evolve into country-wide chaos, inviting renewed interference from outside.

## II. AREA IMPLICATIONS

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9. The Yemeni civil war is having repercussions



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Iraq and Syria are standing on the sidelines;

the former concerned only whether the Sallal government recognizes Kuwait and the latter hoping Nasser gets a black eye in Yemen. Antimonarchical, nationalist elements throughout the area have been heartened by the Yemeni coup.

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The UAR

10. Nasser has committed himself and his regime fully to the success of the republican experiment in Yemen. He has now poured in some 8 to 10,000 ground troops plus extensive air and naval support into Yemen and literally can not afford to lose there. While this operation has undoubtedly proved a valuable exercise in logistics and even in combat for the Egyptian armed forces, it has imposed a heavy financial strain on an Egypt whose finances are not in the best condition. However, we believe that Nasser will stretch his resources to the utmost to assure success. Grumbling in Egypt at the extent of the commitment and at rumored casualties is not critical and will probably diminish as the UAR is able to recall some of its troops and claim a victory.

11. Nasser's future actions will be influenced to some degree by the US. He apparently considers US recognition of the Yemeni Republic to be of considerable importance. He almost certainly sees US acceptance of his role in Yemen as of major long-term value to himself.

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15. The emergence of an Egyptian-supported republic in Yemen has disturbed both the British and the conservative shaykhs and sultans of the Aden Protectorate. Long accustomed to providing safe haven for objects of the Imam's wrath and in some cases to supporting rival Yemeni candidates for the throne, the rulers are aghast at the modernity appearing in Sana. In general, they will probably continue to actively aid the royalist elements and to the extent Yemen is dominated by Nasser, this will have the sympathy of [ ] the UK. The rulers' attitude, the existence of the Yemen republic and the extensive republican sentiment in Aden Colony will seriously damage the UK's hopes for promoting a safe, stable government in South Arabia.

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III. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE US

16. Success by the Yemeni regime in establishing itself with massive backing from Cairo will inevitably affect US relations

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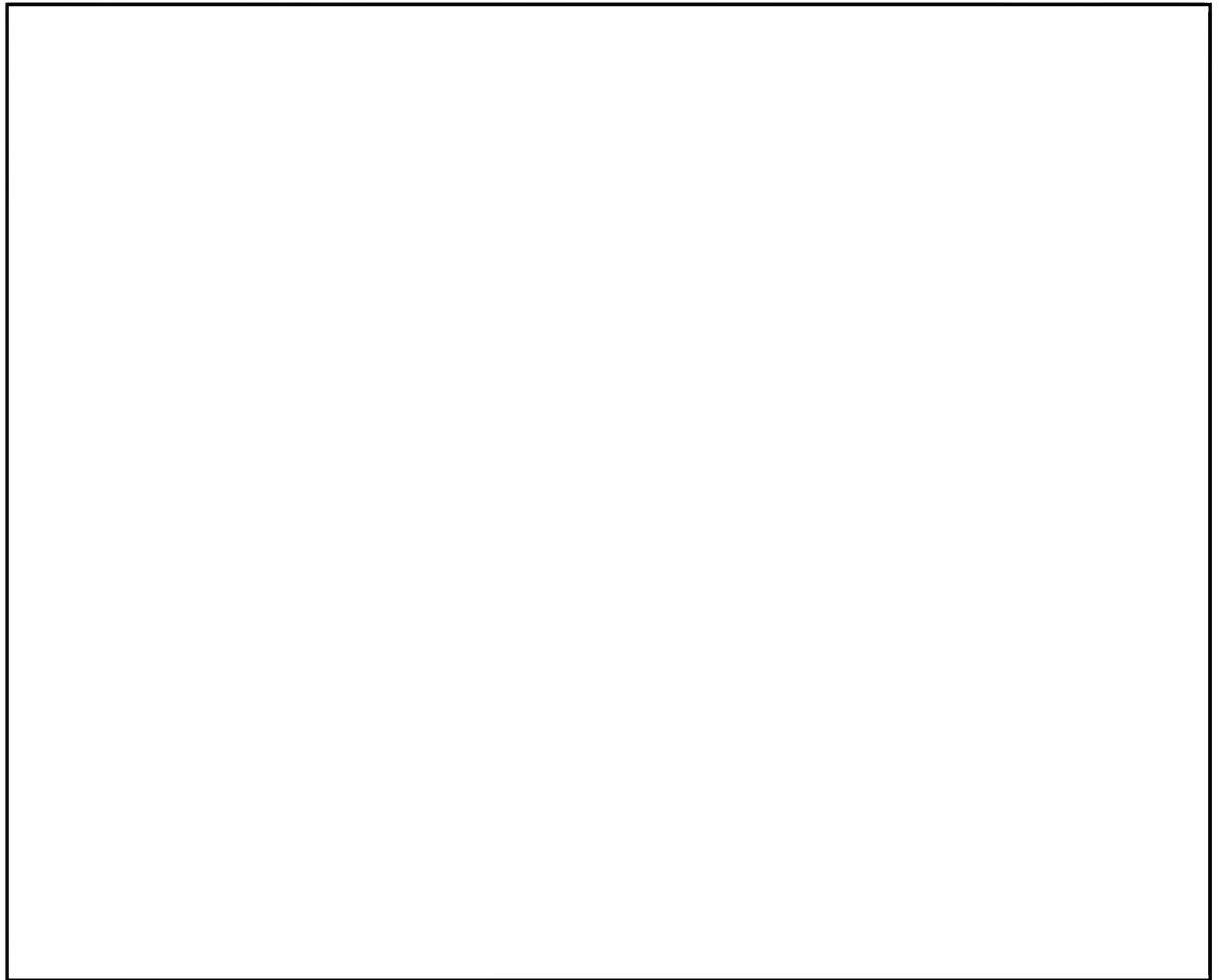
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17. Both in and out of Arab governments, the notion, born when the US did not jump to the side of Syria when the latter broke away from the UAR, that Nasser is the US's "chosen instrument" in the Middle East will be re-enforced, especially in Syria and Lebanon. Arab political opinion views power as essentially unitary; i.e. there is no room for the loyal opposition or for sharing power between different systems. Public opinion will

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increasingly tend to equate US economic aid to Egypt with support  
for Nasser's revolutionary aims and to play down -- though not  
by any means discount entirely [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] in a final showdown thus to hamper US hopes  
for achieving moderate progress and reform in other countries.

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